

**CONNECTICUT SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING ASSOCIATION, INC.**

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To Senator Stillman and Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee

RE: Raised Bill #1105, An Act Concerning Special Education

My name is Mallory Buckingham and I am the VP for Government Affairs for the CT Speech Language and Hearing Association (CSHA). The Speech – Language Pathologists (SLPs) who work in the public schools, and faculty at the two training institutions in CT, are pleased to see the language seeking to clarify who is eligible to provide applied behavior analysis (ABA) services in the schools.

Thank you for including our discipline in this group.

SLPs use instructional methods employing principles of behavior analysis with students with a variety of language delays and disorders such as intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, autism and various genetic disorders, to teach speech, language, reading and social skills in the classroom (co-teaching with regular and special education teachers) as well as other school and home environments, since communication happens everywhere, and the language of the classroom is different from the language of the playground and cafeteria.

ABA methods used by SLPs include the application of prompting hierarchies, shaping methods, and the use of repetition and reinforcement. Our discipline plays a critical role in the remediation of severe behavioral problems, by conducting observations and then analyzing the communicative intent of the problem behavior. SLPs then teach alternate functional communication behaviors to replace the negative behavior.

SLPs work collaboratively with BCBAs in both private and public education settings, and a few individuals have BOTH credentials.

CSHA would like to offer a technical language suggestion. Where the word ‘speech therapist’ appears in the raised bill language, I would like to point out that we hold a Master’s degree and are trained to diagnose, where ‘therapists’ do not diagnose, and have a Bachelor degree. We respectfully request that the title, Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP), be used when referring our discipline in your legislative documents.

I thank the committee members for your hard work and commitment to Connecticut’s children, and the family’s role in the special education process.

And thank you for acknowledging the work of SLPs in Connecticut’s schools.

Respectfully,

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